



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Agriculture department heads to meet in Garden City

TOPEKA – Secretaries, commissioners and directors of agriculture from 12 Midwestern states will arrive in Garden City this weekend for the Midwest Association of State Departments of Agriculture 2002 meeting.

The group will be greeted by Kansas Secretary of Agriculture Jamie Clover Adams, who earned the honor of hosting the annual meeting when she was elected president of the association last year. The meeting is officially dubbed “MASDA 2002: Agriculture is BIG in Kansas.”

The four-day event starts informally with a welcome reception at the Plaza Hotel Saturday evening. The meeting will officially get underway when Kansas Senator Stephen Morris delivers opening remarks at a brunch Sunday morning. Morris is the first of three high-ranking Kansas officials to address the group.

Lt. Gov. Gary Sherrer will speak at a reception and dinner at the Garden City fairgrounds Sunday evening, and Kansas Adjutant General Gregory Gardner will speak about homeland security at a luncheon Monday at the Southwind Country Club.

Federal officials also are featured on the agenda. Dr. James Butler, deputy undersecretary of USDA’s marketing and regulatory programs, will speak at a workshop Monday afternoon, as will James Gulliford, administrator of the EPA Region VII office.

The group also will get an up-close look at local agricultural operations when they tour BeefLand Feed Yard and the Santa Fe Trail Dairy. Other tour stops include the Gray County Wind Farm, the Ogallala Aquifer Center and Reeve Agri-Energy.

The regional association has members from Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin and Kansas. It is part of a larger association, the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture, which is based in Washington, D.C. NASDA president Billy Ray Smith, Kentucky’s commissioner of agriculture, also is scheduled to attend the event.

Planning for the meeting began nearly a year ago, when Adams selected Garden City as the ideal location based on its rich agricultural tradition. In 2000, the Kansas Agricultural Statistics Service ranked Finney County first in the state for the value of crops harvested (\$92 million) and livestock produced (\$130 million), and second in the state for the number of acres devoted to farming.

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“It wasn’t an easy decision to make, considering I had the entire state to choose from,” said Adams. “But Garden City seemed like the perfect location because it offers a compelling snapshot of Kansas’ thriving agricultural industry.”

Adams also credits staff at the agriculture marketing division with the Kansas Department of Commerce and Housing with helping put the meeting together.

“I always welcome the opportunity to work with the ag marketing division,” Adams said. “This is just one more in a line of successful collaborations.”

Kansas differs from other state departments of agriculture in that agriculture marketing is not part of the agency. Several years ago the function was shifted to the Kansas Department of Commerce and Housing, which Adams considers a wise move because it includes agriculture with the other Kansas products the state is promoting.